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Music among the Poets and Poetical Writers—(continued.)

passage bearing upon our subject most especially, is this :—

“A Nightingale,  
Nature's best skill'd musician, undertakes  
The challenge ; and, for every several strain  
The well-shap'd youth could touch, she sang her down ;  
He could not run division with more art  
Upon his quaking instrument, than she  
The nightingale did with her various notes  
Reply to.”—*Ford*.

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“Fame tells of groves—from England far away—  
Groves\* that inspire the Nightingale to trill  
And modulate, with subtle reach of skill  
Elsewhere unmatched, her ever-varying lay ;  
Such bold report I venture to gainsay :  
For I have heard the choir of Richmond hill  
Chanting, with indefatigable bill,  
Strains that recalled to mind a distant day ;  
When, haply under shade of that same wood,  
And scarcely conscious of the dashing oars  
Plied steadily between those willowy shores,  
The sweet souled Poet of the Seasons stood—  
Listening, and listening long, in rapturous mood,  
Ye heavenly birds ! to your progenitors.”

*Wordsworth.*

## OBJECTS OF MUSICAL EDUCATION AND THEIR TIME.

BY DR. MARX.†

(Continued from page 60.)

### PLAYING ON THE PIANO.

After singing, the command of the pianoforte is our most essential qualification, and among us is so considered. The piano is the only instrument, excepting the scarcely accessible organ, on which melody and harmony, and the rich web of combined and simultaneous voices or parts, can be produced with accuracy and almost unlimited magnificence of effect. It is also highly adapted to accompanying song, and to conducting. From these advantages it has happened, that for this single instrument more master-pieces have been written, since the time of Seb. Bach up to Beethoven, than for all other instruments put together. Most songs have been composed with accompaniment for that instrument—organ parts can be transferred without any change—and whatever quartet and orchestral music found favour with the public, was immediately presented to pianoforte players in the form of arrangements, &c. Therefore, no branch of practice can promise so rich a harvest as piano playing ; and it must be acknowledged, that, without so abundant a field, any extended acquaintance with our musical literature would be scarcely possible to the world in general. To the composer this instrument is nearly indispensable, partly on the foregoing grounds, and partly because no other is so appropriate, both for exercising and exciting his own imagination and for proving the effect of many-part compositions. It is equally important to the conductor and to the singing master. Even its defects are advantages to musical education, and particularly to the composer. The pianoforte is greatly inferior to bowed and wind instruments in inward feeling and power of *tone* or quality of sound, in the power of sustaining a *tone*, inequality of

force, in crescendo, or in diminuendo, in melting two or more *tones* into each other, and in gliding imperceptibly from the one to the other, all which so admirably succeed on bowed instruments. The piano does not fully satisfy the ear : its performance, compared to that of bowed and wind instruments, is in a manner colourless, and its effect, in comparison with the resplendence of an orchestra, is as a drawing to a painting. But exactly on this account, the piano moves more powerfully the creative faculty of both player and hearer ; for it requires their assistance to complete and colour, to give full significance to that which is but spiritually indicated. Thus imagination fosters the new idea, and penetrates therewith to our hearts ; while other instruments immediately seize, and move, and satisfy the senses, and by their means attack the feelings, more powerfully, perhaps, in a sensuous direction, but not so fruitfully in the soul. This is probably the chief reason why the piano has become the especial instrument for spiritually musical education, and particularly for composition ; since other instruments easily overcome their votaries, whom they seduce into their own instrumental peculiarities, and create a one-sided mannerism in their productions.

For the earliest instruction, also, the piano has the advantage (good tuning being supposed) of presenting to the pupil correct *tones*, and a clear insight into the tonic system by the key-board.

But just from this point arises the important quality of the instrument, which may be perilous to all the real advantages derived from it, unless it be sedulously counteracted ; and this, we must confess, is at present but little thought of—nay, indeed, that dangerous quality is speculated on, and an entirely false system of education is built on it for outward show, through whose apparent advantages even the true artistic education is represented in a false light, as ignorant and baneful. Since the pianoforte has its fixed *tones* provided, it is easier to play upon this instrument than upon any other, without any internal feeling of correctness of *tone*, or even without hearing, and to arrive at a certain degree of mechanical dexterity. How often do we meet ready piano players, who, from want of a cultivated feeling of *tone*, are incapable of singing a correct succession of *tones*, or of imagining it,—who have no clear notion of what they are playing—nay, who in reality hear nothing correctly ! How many bravura players might one name, to whom the artistic meaning of a simple movement remains a sealed book, and who therefore perform the greatest and the least compositions, with assumption and vanity indeed, but without inward participation—without awakening joy in themselves or in their audience, but merely a fruitless astonishment at their technical cleverness ! And how deep has this perversion of art into dead mechanism penetrated into artistic life ! Whoever has an opportunity of observing many students of music and their teachers, cannot conceal from himself that at present, particularly in large towns devoted to vanity and fashion, the greater part of the pianoforte students are, in this manner, led astray ; and that a great part of the teachers are themselves ignorant of the right path, or otherwise have not the courage to oppose the stream of fashion, or the allurements of example and personal advantage.

If, however, satisfactory instruction is not to be expected from all masters, nor every student is to hope for the choice of a good master, there remains still a tolerably sure method of guarding against this wide-spread evil. It consists in rigidly examining the work, which is exacted from the pupil, in the pupil himself, and his parents or preceptor insisting absolutely that the teacher shall furnish really profitable work ; or, if that cannot be secured with certainty, in seeking immediately another teacher more trustworthy to his art.

\* Wallachia is the country alluded to.

† Dr. Marx's *General Musical Instruction*. Published in Novello's Library for the Diffusion of Musical Knowledge. Cloth, price 6s. 6d.

(To be continued.)